

Big Water Bulletin

October-November 2010



US Army Corps of Engineers®

Jacksonville District

The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District** specializes in the planning, engineering, construction and management of large infrastructure projects in Florida and the Caribbean. The Corps' mission includes flood control and water management; navigation; shore protection and restoration; environmental restoration; hazardous, toxic and radioactive remediation; military support and emergency support. The Army Corps of Engineers built the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project 50 years ago at the state of Florida's request and with the authorization of the United States Congress.

Corps remodels visitor centers on Okeechobee Waterway

The Corps of Engineers remodeled two visitor centers on the Okeechobee Waterway and now the centers include state-of-the-art interactive exhibits.

More than 100 local residents and Corps volunteers attended grand re-opening celebrations Oct. 30 of the **St. Lucie Visitor Center**, 2170 S.W. Canal Street, Stuart, Fla. and the **W.P. Franklin Visitor Center**, 1160 S. Franklin Lock Road, Alva, Fla.



Oke the Osprey, the Jacksonville District's mascot, poses with his new friends at the reopening of the W.P. Franklin Visitor Center, Oct. 30.

Dike construction begins in Pahokee soon

The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District** has issued two contracts for construction on the Herbert Hoover Dike within the city of Pahokee. Construction begins as early as this month, and will likely conclude by spring 2013.

The Corps of Engineers built the Herbert Hoover Dike more than 75 years ago to reduce the risk of flooding to communities and farms surrounding Lake Okeechobee. The dike has done an excellent job, but like anything that has aged and been exposed to the elements, it needs a lot of constant care. The dike is an earthen structure and seepage naturally occurs. When seepage or leaks carry dike materials, it erodes the dike's interior in a process known as piping. The Corps' major concern is erosion, which can lead to dike failure.

The Corps of Engineers identified the strengthening of the dike as a top national dam safety priority. In 2008, the Corps began construction on the dike's most vulnerable 22-mile section, from Port Mayaca to Belle Glade, as part of the **Herbert Hoover Dike Rehabilitation Project**.

The Corps is installing a wall within the dike, known as a "cutoff" wall, which will arrest and prevent piping in the dike and its foundation. The wall is about two feet wide and three stories deep from the dike crest. The Corps will

take other steps, too, to strengthen the dike.

Recently, the Corps issued two contracts for cutoff wall construction in the city of Pahokee. One contract is from Canal Point to the Pahokee marina and spans 3.4 miles. The other contract is from the marina to just north of the Palm Beach County Glades Airport and spans 2.7 miles. Construction



Cutoff wall construction will take place from Canal Point to south of Pahokee.

on both sections will start at the northern limits and move southwardly in increments. Both contractors will work at the same time, and as construction continues, residents and businesses will likely experience some impacts.

"We are very aware of our neighbors," said **Tim Willadsen**, Corps project manager for the Herbert Hoover Dike Rehabilitation Project. Contractors will use water trucks, mufflers, screens and take other steps to reduce impacts. Willadsen asks the public to use extra caution near North Lake Avenue, which contractors will use for access to the dike. The Corps anticipates some traffic congestion there at times.

Construction in Pahokee is a necessary step to ensure the safety of the community. "Everything we're doing brings us closer to making the dike safer and, therefore, helping keep people and their property safe, too," Willadsen said.

The Corps asks that residents immediately notify contractors about safety or other construction-related concerns in the area. **Treviicos South, Inc.** will install cutoff wall from Canal Point to the Pahokee marina. Contact Craig Humble, Treviicos' safety health officer, at 617-594-1747 or chumble@treviicos.com. **Bauer Foundation Corp.** will install cutoff wall from the Pahokee marina to just north of the airport. Contact Zina El-Daghar, community relations liaison, at 561-436-3472 or zeldaghar@coastalcaisson.com.

For information about the rehabilitation project, please contact Ted Roberts, the Corps' Glades Communities liaison in Pahokee, at 561-924-5534 / mobile 904-576-3010, or Ingrid Bon, project manager forward in West Palm Beach, at 561-472-8888.

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Providing recreation to six million visitors a year



Adam Tarplee often marvels at the natural beauty of Florida when he visits a Corps recreation area.

Adam Tarplee has a job many outdoor enthusiasts would envy: he is the natural resources program manager for the Corps' Jacksonville District.

Tarplee provides technical expertise for the Corps' eight recreation areas, three visitor centers, three campgrounds, campsites for boats, and the 110-mile **Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail**.

"We make sure the visiting public has the best experience it can, at the same time maintaining a healthy natural environment," he said.

As program manager, Tarplee oversees the budget, assesses the condition of the areas and facilities, and looks for new technology and tools to help the Corps manage its recreation areas and facilities.

All recreation areas are located along the **Okeechobee Waterway**. Facilities include 109 recreational vehicle and tent campsites, 16 boat campsites, hiking trails, picnic areas and barbecue grills. More than six million people visit Corps recreation areas in Florida each year.

Tarplee has many resources to draw upon to help manage these recreation areas, as the Corps of Engineers is the largest federal provider of water-based recreation in the United States. Each year, more than 350 million people visit a Corps recreation area, which includes 4,500 miles of trails, 3,400 boat launch ramps, and 33 percent of all U.S. freshwater fishing. Just recently, Tarplee received new tools for water safety outreach.

A native of North Carolina, Tarplee came to work with the Corps in 2002. He started as a cooperative student, served as a park ranger in New Orleans, and joined the Jacksonville District in December 2006 as a park ranger. He became the natural resources program manager earlier this year.

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"Each of these visitor centers has had a complete renovation and features brand new exhibits, including 'Alien Invaders' about non-native plant and animal species, life in and around Lake Okeechobee, and the history of Herbert Hoover Dike," said Adam Tarplee, Corps natural resources program manager.



Alexis Crook takes a turn at the Be a Lock Operator exhibit.

The Corps built the St. Lucie Lock in 1941 for navigation and flood control purposes. The Corps also constructed the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam in 1965 for flood reduction, water control, navigation and prevention of saltwater intrusion. Both locks are open 365 days a year from 6 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted in the U.S. Coast Guard "Notice to Mariners."

For information about the St. Lucie Lock and Visitor Center, call 772-287-2665. For information on the W.P. Franklin Lock and Visitor Center, call 239-694-5451. Additional information is online at www.saj.usace.army.mil, click "Find a Recreation Area" or visit www.owwvisitorcenters.com.



Olivia Crook points to a fish in the exhibit that looks similar to the ones she catches with her dad when they go boating together.

To Learn More:

Both the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and the dike strengthening project will take years to complete. There are many ways to keep informed and get involved. Both have Web sites, newsletters, and public meetings.

The Corps of Engineers has an active community outreach program around the lake, too. To learn more, visit www.saj.usace.army.mil or call 1-800-291-9405.

For more information about Everglades restoration and how it affects you, visit www.evergladesplan.org or call 1-877-CERP-USA.



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